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### **USDA Program Hopes to Bring Large Animal Vets to Underserved Areas**



For a number of years, many veterinarians and livestock producers have acknowledged that there are fewer livestock veterinarians offering services in Colorado. One important cause for this is the heavy educational debt load incurred by students but a new program by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) hopes to bring veterinarians to underserved parts of the state while offsetting a significant portion of educational debt.

A new program initiated by the USDA called the "Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program" (VMLRP) will exchange veterinary experience for educational costs; up to \$25,000 could be provided per year for three or four years of service in veterinary shortage areas.

Colorado has been allowed eight sites to be nominated for consideration as shortage areas and our nominations for this program have been submitted. Because funding is limited, not all veterinarians applying to the VMLRP are expected to receive loan repayment awards and those chosen must go through a USDA application process for qualification and acceptance into the program.

"We feel that this is a unique opportunity for Colorado communities, livestock producers, and veterinarians; it is important that we compete well in the VMLRP," said State Veterinarian, Dr. Keith Roehr.

For more on the VMLRP, visit [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/animals/in\\_focus/an\\_health\\_if\\_vmlrp.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/animals/in_focus/an_health_if_vmlrp.html).